
Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen by Eugen Fischer

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Negro Culture in West Africa. By GEORGE W. ELLIS, K.C., F.R.G.S. 1914. 1 vol. Pp.290. Price \$2.15. G. W. Ellis, 3000 South State Street, Chicago, Ill.

In his *Negro Culture in West Africa*, Mr. Ellis gives the results of his studies in the social life of the Vai, a race of true negroes found chiefly in Liberia and a shrewd and capable people whose culture we are apt to underestimate. They are in the main Muhammedans who have been touched by Islamic culture to the extent that certain of them possess libraries of Arabic books covering a considerable range of subjects. The author describes their physical aspect and treats of their life in its economic, social, political, and religious phases. More than one-third of the book is devoted to Vai proverbs and folklore stories, which contain so largely the native philosophy of life. Perhaps the most striking feature in the culture of the Vai is that they alone among African negro tribes have invented a script which has been put into practical use. Specimen plates show the character of this script which is different from any of the written languages of the world.

The author, from his eight years' service as Secretary of the United States Legation in Liberia, and the investigations made by him during that period, is especially well-qualified to give an intimate and sympathetic picture of the life of a racial group which is destined to have much to do with forming the future of Liberia.

Frederick Starr, professor of anthropology in the University of Chicago, contributes an interesting introduction, in which he points out the necessity, to students of race development, of understanding the history and present status of such African tribes as the Vai.

The volume is an important and interesting contribution to the knowledge of negro culture in Africa.

Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen. By EUGEN FISCHER. Jena: Gustav Fischer. 1913. Pp. vii, 327.

Attempts to establish the Mendelian law have been made by experiments in the cross-breeding of plants and animals, but it has been much more difficult to work out the laws of heredity among men where experimentation is impossible. Dr. Fischer's contention is that the best results will be obtained not by a study of pure races but rather of those races where cross-breeding has taken place. For example, a study of the crossing of the white

and negro, the white and Indian, and the negro and Indian in the Americas, would throw a great deal of light on heredity, were it not for the fact that they form a class of society to be distinguished only with the greatest difficulty from the other classes. For that reason Dr. Fischer has made his studies among the Bastards of Rehoboth in German Southwest Africa. They are the result of the crossing of Boer and Hottentot, races so distinct that it is easy to trace the inheritance of their physical characteristics in which Dr. Fischer was principally interested. They constitute a distinct group whose history is known with a fair degree of accuracy. The book begins with a description of the country and a history of the Bastards as a race and also of the twenty-three families of whom the author made a special study; a description of their physical characteristics and a discussion of the Mendelian law as it bears on the inheritance of these characteristics; and finally a brief study of their life, political, economic, and psychic, showing the influence of the two original races upon the cross-breed. Dr. Fischer has worked out with a great deal of care, twenty-three family histories and has made measurements of a great many of their individual members. His conclusions are that the Mendelian law holds good for race-crossing, the inheritance of the racial traits of the two lines following alternately, but that the inheritance is of individual rather than racial characteristics and that a new pure race does not result from cross-breeding.

En Algérie. By ARNOLD VAN GENNEP. Paris: Mercure de France. 1914. Pp. 217.

This little account of M. van Gennep's five months' stay in Algiers in search of ethnological material is one to be read with a good deal of pleasure if not with so very much profit. His purpose was to study the native arts and industries in their proper environment and he has gathered together here the by-products of his search for knowledge in the form of the amusing experiences which befell him and which lose nothing in the telling.

The one serious contribution among these sketches is a study of the native mentality, in which he notes that the natives are able to comprehend our whole civilization, intellectual and material, excepting only our natural sciences to which we owe our intellectual freedom. There takes place here as in the inhabitants of many other tropical lands an arrest of mental develop-